

THE PLAIN VIEW



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMMENTARY	49
EDITORIAL	52
FROM LIBERALISM TO SOCIALISM ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON	54
THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE J. B. COATES	61
A WORD TO THE BORED	65
BOOK REVIEWS	
PRIMER OF THE COMING WORLD LEOPOLD SCHWARZSCHILD	66
THE NATURAL ORDER H. J. MASSINGHAM AND OTHERS	68
GERMANY, RUSSIA, AND THE FUTURE J. T. MACCURDY	69
RUSSO-POLISH RELATIONS S. KONOVALOV	70
FULL SPEED AHEAD! VISCOUNT HINCHINGBROOKE	70
POLITICS MADE PLAIN T. L. HORABIN	70
THE BRITAIN I WANT EMANUEL SHINWELL	70
THE VATICAN IN WAR AND PEACE EDITH MOORE	71
ÆSOP'S FABLES ARNRID JOHNSTON	72
TAIL-PIECE	72
TO THE READER	<i>Inside Back Cover</i>

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COMMENTARY

A SECULAR CRISIS. The *malaise* with which the French are consciously afflicted has its distressful seat in the shortage of all supplies and the inadequacy of all means for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of their country. Like a delirium, this frustration is a theatre where we watch the tense play of lighted shadows in the spiritual conflict which elsewhere more obscurely divides the old world from the new. The debate on the *épuration* begun by François Mauriac's protest against the condemnation to death of Henri Béraud, and sustained for a fortnight in the Paris press (in temper and in eloquence magnificently worthy of the high civilization of France), is, like the soliloquies of Hamlet rising above the action of the play, a passionate meditation on the tragic confusions of fate. Liberal principles are stale, flat, and unprofitable even to liberals. Moral responsibility is more than legal right. The poisoned have more claim to pity than the poisoner. On the other hand, these ways of blood are a labyrinth, and it may be time to look for a way out. There is charity, and there is justice. And what is charity? and what, justice. The people will take vengeance into their own hands. The people fear the terror.

In this country which good luck has spared these cavernous horrors we are still able to take a prim and donnish view of liberal principles; it is a permissive society we are used to, in which minorities and persons may live in peace or mischief under the law pursuing happiness or damnation in their own style. It is only in bad dreams that we hear the harsh voice of the State saying to its minorities and its citizens, "If you are recalcitrant, even if you are indifferent, you are liable to liquidation; if you are not for us, we may have regretfully to conclude that you are against us." But the voice haunts our dreams. It is a prolonged wind from the east and makes us fear that our happy-go-lucky climate may be going to suffer a change, a secular disturbance. Well, if the issues are forced, it may. In the roughness of emergency, things are sometimes done, have to be done, which can only be justified afterwards by making it practicable to do better. Let us recognise that laws, established rights, the inert will of majorities, sacred conventions that they are, will not afford sanctuary in the crisis to those who use their protection to fight against the ripe possibilities of a new order. Moral standards there must be; and a difference as of heaven and hell ranges between a society which acknowledges some such standard and one that does not acknowledge any. But it is madness to think that standards which have become nature by generations of respect can be imposed with authority to prevent the establishment of new standards, if new standards are wanted. And new standards are wanted. The new standards are agreements about standardization. Not every question can be kept open indefinitely. That is not liberty. It may be necessary soon to close some questions, and to standardize some of the permanent bases of human life ripe for standardization. It is a promise of freedom. The wilful opponents of

these necessary standardizations have, in a critical situation, no great claim to social consideration, whatever their established rights may be. And others may learn from the "wretched, rash, intruding fool," who was slain behind the arras, that when great issues are joined "to be too busy is some danger."

MARRIAGE OF HEALTH AND AGRICULTURE. One intolerable inequality between human beings is the physical inequality attributable to unequal standards of nutrition. It is intolerable because it is not now inevitable. The refinements of contemporary knowledge about the production, storage, and value of all foodstuffs are fantastically remote from the practice of agriculture in peasant countries of vast population like India and China. We must suppose that about one half of the world's population is under-fed; and perhaps two-fifths of that number is permanently hungry. There is a fundamental job to be done beset by formidable difficulties. The Food and Agriculture Organization, the permanent instrument of international co-operation in this field, proposed by the Interim Commission established at Hot Springs, will be able to take the initiative in narrowing the gap between knowledge and practice, in stimulating and helping governments to solve their problems, and in promoting world schemes for the control of commodities and the conservation and development of resources. The constitution of the new organization has been accepted by Great Britain (Miscellaneous No. 4, 1945. Cmd. 6590). It is to be hoped that Congress in the United States will also accept it at an early date, and that the number of acceptances will rapidly reach the minimum required to give force to the proposal. Then we shall look with the greatest eagerness for the appointment of a Director General of proved energy and capacity. For although such international bodies are mainly advisory, by the quality of their work and the drive and ability of their personnel they can achieve very great authority, they can make all the difference between inertia and action among the nations. It is by the agency of such bodies when they are staffed by those who rise to the height of their opportunity that there will take place the genuine creation of a world community, a common humanity. To deplore these new organs of world co-operation as so many expensive additions to bureaucracy is very mischievous and absurdly ignorant. They have no powers of interference, except in so far as governments agree to use them for administrative functions; and they tend to attract staff of wide practical experience and patient idealism. To support their work by informed and active opinion is the part of decent citizenship everywhere.

HONESTY IS A GOOD POLICY. The Webbs in their documentary study of Soviet Communism suggested that collectivist administration had passed the stage of agitation and revolution and entered upon the stage of consultation, discussion, and study; it was not the Third International

and the Communist Parties which were the revolutionary ferment in a changing world, but the sober ideas of responsible statesmen and others reflecting upon what the Soviet statesmen and administrators had done and were doing. The suggestion has been reinforced by sensational developments since the Webbs wrote. It is all the easier to trace the disturbing currents which now muddy opinion.

Everybody recognizes that it is the statesmanlike thing for Great Britain to strive for unity of purpose with the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. But some are ready to maintain that whatever Russia proposes or does must be all right; and others are consumed with suspicion and fear of every such proposal or act. These ask, Who can resist the demands which Russia can make; and if Europe is to fall under Russian hegemony, for what principle have we fought the war? And, seeing that we are also at the mercy of the economic policy which the U.S.A. choose to follow, it seems that we are no longer masters of our fate; we must live on the terms which others are in a position to dictate. Hence the indiscreet speeches of the great, who want to warn us that we have to choose between accepting this dictation and building ourselves up to be strong enough to take part in the game. The dilemma is not unreal. But it is wiser to think of it less as a dilemma of national policy and more as the inherent difficulty of bringing those to rely on untried methods of international co-operation who still dispose of the means of immediate self-help. In such circumstances, this country has a most important historical part to play, and would be disgraced both by accepting dictation and the *fait accompli* and also by building up countervailing power; it is our part to take the lead in pressing hard for the establishment and full use of organs of international co-operation, and in promoting and supporting policies which best promise stable government and economic prosperity. Instead of seeking to establish ourselves in the leadership of a prearranged block, we should bid for the suffrage of all nations in each concrete case by force of the policies which we adopt, getting a reputation for a progressive lead and an assurance of wide support. There is too much intimidation in our thinking and too little spirit and human dignity. It will not be possible to establish mutual confidence among the nations unless there is first moral confidence on the part of some. If public opinion is to crystallize into this conception of British policy, it must cleanse itself of suspicions and of doctrinaire views.

THE MEEK INHERIT THE EARTH. It is a commonplace of current economic discussion that the exploitation of a world market for exporters' profits should be regarded as having reached its limits, that an international struggle for an increasingly favourable balance of trade is domestically disastrous, that the world is due to return to stable and balanced regional economies exchanging surpluses to make up deficiencies, and no longer straining resources and constraining consumption to make wealthy nations, private fortunes—and wars. It is hardly less

well recognized that with the end of this phase of economic opportunism there is the opportunity and the need systematically to repair the ravages which it has worked. In future, industry can be sited to social advantage, and housing planned in relation to it; town and country can be happily married; full productive employment can be achieved on a high level of home consumption; education can be adapted to aptitudes and to life; communities can be equipped for many-sided development: these real values need not be sacrificed to the pursuit of money values. This movement of regeneration on a new basis (the profound revolution of our time) imposes upon national governments enlarged powers and new purposes. But it is upon the organs of local government and on local communities that the final responsibility will fall for taking hold of the promised good which is being made possible by the great changes of the time. It is ordinary men and women in their own neighbourhood to whom opportunity is coming, who are in the focus of eager attention, on whom the spotlight will be turned.

If it has been historically necessary to think mainly in terms of Great Powers (the war-making nations), it is none the less a political vulgarity. The small nation has not been less able to produce distinguished men and to achieve civilization. There is now some promise of recovery for the small nation as for the local community. If the big problems of national security and economic co-operation can be solved by international agreement and arrangement, not only will the world be made safe for small nations, but also Great Powers will tend to resolve into their constituent parts. That would mean a riper state of civilization, a maturing of social values, the tendency to leave preoccupation with means and to concentrate on the enjoyment of ends.

These trends and possibilities are accompanied (indeed, they are made practicable) by the common currency of universally used inventions, which can rapidly equalize the equipment for modern living of the backward and the advanced. The glory of the metropolis is taken away by the progress which removes the reproach of provincialism. Culture, like every other manifestation of the human spirit, is an adjustment to material conditions, and the culture of the new human civilization, if we achieve it, will find a quaint barbarism in some of the things of ancient pride.

EDITORIAL

THE underlying theme in these pages this quarter is the apparent conflict between the ethical ideals of liberalism and collectivism. Crudely stated, it is this: liberalism insists absolutely on the complete freedom of everybody to pursue happiness and propagate his opinions in his own way under the law, and insists (more vaguely) that this personal right sets a limit to political action, that the laws should be enacted solely to protect legitimate interests which are in demonstrable need of protection; collectivism requires the individual to conform to a social pattern, and the law has its objective source and sanction in the require-

ments of this pattern rather than in compromise between sectional interests otherwise free.

This conflict, in this country obscurely felt rather than squarely faced, crops out here and there in speeches and books, in conversation, and sometimes in the turn of events, manifesting itself mostly as a fear of collectivism. This fear, for example, runs through several of the books reviewed in these pages. The conflict is thrown into confusion by this fear, and if a political crisis should force the issue, panic would drive very many people into the camp to which they do not really belong. That might be disastrous.

The difference between these ethical ideals is not really the stark opposition which appears at first sight in an abstract statement of it. For example, liberalism may develop naturally into collectivism by major agreements operative through the law, when the need for certain broad social directives is widely recognized; if not, liberalism is itself not liberalism but a stranglehold of established interests imposing, by force and fraud, a set social pattern. On the other hand, collectivism may resolve the practical contradictions in liberalism, and establish the conditions which make liberal ideals fully practicable; for example, government by discussion. That is to say, in a liberal society law may really have its source and sanction in authority and power, because agreement in that society is a necessitous bargain; and in a collective society law may really be rooted in genuine agreement. There is no ideal opposition in this conflict, unless one arbitrarily assumes that it is an imprescriptible human right that everybody shall be free to pursue his own interests in his own way, and not a limited right prescribed by positive laws. That would of course be an absurd and unworkable assumption. It is better to admit that there are no imprescriptible human rights (a contradiction in terms), that there are human dues and moral claims which it is the part of conscience to recognize, acknowledge, or reject. And the part of conscience can be played at least as well in a collectivist society as in a liberal one. There is, then, no ideal opposition between liberalism and collectivism; liberalism may lead to collectivism, and collectivism may realize liberalism. In other words, it is men, policies, and events, and the needs of the situation, which demand our attention; and we must protect that attention from the clamorous distraction of catchwords.

The rule of law, impartial control by the mechanism of the market, the "economic man," "life for the sake of culture": here are some of the abstractions which derive from liberal standards of freedom and objectivity. Without radical modification of the rule of law and the impersonal control by the market, it is impossible to bring together in a social synthesis the products of the division of labour and of specialism in research, that is to say, restore the "whole man" and "culture for the sake of life." It is already accepted in principle that there must be educational planning, health planning, regional and town planning, and organized industrial application of the sciences and arts. The main

content of these plans is a matter of objective standard. There is some prospect of achieving this social transformation by agreement. But if this prospect should be endangered by obstruction, or should be altered by too much concession to established interests, the situation would become dangerous. There are those who have a vision of what is possible and necessary, and the will to achieve it; and in such a situation the conventions of liberal democracy might prove intolerably unreal.

The kind of social pattern which is in prospect and the compulsions which it requires more closely affect persons in relation to their property than in relation to themselves. Of course the material conditions of life have the most positive effects upon the human spirit; that is the imperative reason for the changes which are now possible and necessary. And there would be no sense in these changes if their positive effect on the human spirit were not to enlarge its scope and multiply its opportunities. But that consummation lies with the individual and is the work of his hands, or mocks our lively hopes. Thus it is not merely for the sake of "freedom" or as a safeguard against oppression that the individual and the local community must keep, win, and use initiative and power; there is no other sense in central planning of the social pattern; local and individual creativity is its point and fulfilment. That recognition should be the common starting-point of contemporary political discussion; and it would be if fear of collectivism did not usurp the dignity of reason. In the mind which is not possessed by a positive vision of what is to be achieved, all the devils of delirium will swarm into the vacuum. That is the situation.

The writers of the two articles which we print make their own comment upon this theme.

FROM LIBERALISM TO SOCIALISM

THE Liberal and Socialist approaches to political issues are often regarded by disputants on both sides of the question as mutually exclusive. I believe this to be a mistaken view. The Liberal and Socialist positions are indeed contradictory; but I think it can be shown that they are dialectically related—that is, that the Liberal position under the pressure of historical forces inevitably passes into Socialism.

Historically, Liberalism originated in the revolutionary struggle of the middle classes against feudal, clerical and royal oppression. As such, all agree that it played a progressive part in human development. The memorable scenes and slogans of Liberal history belong not to a party, but to mankind. Socialists as well as Liberals remember and honour the Roundheads and regicides of seventeenth century England, and in particular those Levellers who gave their lives to establish that "the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as well as the greatest he." Socialists as well as Liberals hold, in the words of the American Declaration of Independence, that the purpose of government is to secure the

rights of men to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Socialists as well as Liberals uphold the utilitarian standard and inherit the traditions of the great French Revolution. Milton, Blake, Burns, Byron and Shelley are enshrined in the Socialist as in the Liberal pantheon.

But if there is anything obvious about the Liberal idea, it is surely this. The world in which it took shape was a very different world from ours. It was a world of predominantly rural economy and undeveloped industry, in which the most obvious evils were the abuse of the power of the State by economic and clerical monopoly. In such a world it was natural to suppose that if monopoly were swept away, civil and religious liberty established and all made equal before the law, the free exchange of goods and services would automatically ensure the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number.

Little by little, by heroic struggle and by the blood of many martyrs, the Liberal idea was realised. The nineteenth century was its golden age. Freedom slowly broadened down from precedent to precedent. Peace and progress seemed assured. Unfortunately the dream was not fulfilled. For while Liberal statesmen laid stone upon stone of the palace of freedom, the economic foundations slipped from under their feet, leaving the castle suspended in the air. The application of science to industry had inaugurated the machine age and transformed the face of society. The free exchange of goods and services, instead of ensuring the greatest happiness of the greatest number, produced a state of things in which children were consigned to factories by the cartload or worked naked to the waist in evil-smelling mines, until Parliament was forced by the public outcry to override Liberal manufacturers and pass Acts to end the unendurable stench of this *laissez-faire* Utopia.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century the principle of State interference has become almost axiomatic among practical politicians. The difference between Socialists and their opponents is simply this, that while anti-Socialists accept State interference with reluctance and on purely opportunist grounds, Socialists urge it as part of a deliberate policy and of a long-term idea. Liberal or Tory statesmen have limited the hours of labour, legalised trade unionism, passed housing legislation, introduced free education, workmen's compensation, old age pensions, national insurance and so forth, and paid for social services by death duties and graduated income tax. But it is not amiss to point out that these measures have in every case been the result of prolonged pressure, and that the source of pressure has been the working class organised in its trade unions and political parties. In such organisation, from the time of the Owenites and Chartists to the present day, convinced Socialists have usually played a leading part.

But Socialists have never been content to be a "pressure group" for extracting concessions from Liberal or Tory governments. Socialism is above all a theory of social development. As a theory it is directly descended from the theories which actuated Liberalism in its militant

youth. Socialists are often accused of preaching class war. Marxist Socialism (that is the Socialism which counts most in the world to-day) as a matter of fact sees in class struggles the motive power of progress; and so did Liberalism when it was vital and virile. The characteristic pronouncements of early Liberalism make no bones about it. "What were the lords of England but William the Conqueror's colonels, or the barons but his majors, or the knights but his captains?" asked Cromwell's troopers of Richard Baxter, much to his scandal. "Was ever an aristocracy so endowed?" asked Cobden. "They had the colonies, the army, the navy, the Church, and yet they condescended to contend for a slice from the poor man's loaf." Liberalism has never been more popular than when it has raised the cry: "Down with the Lords!"

Socialism takes these slogans of Liberalism, appropriate to an age of decaying feudalism, and translates them into the language of the machine age. When science had been applied to industry, when the blast furnace, the cotton mill and the railway had leapt into life, when the profits of industry in Britain were reinvested in indigo plantations in Bengal and sheep farms in New South Wales, and machine-made British goods flooded the markets of the world, it was obvious that the new class of industrial capitalists occupied a position of privilege more exalted than any landlords had ever enjoyed. To the factory hand, the miner and the docker, Liberal catchwords were a hollow mockery. Capitalism, no less than ancient slavery or medieval serfdom, is a system of exploitation, a method by which one class lives on the labour of another, a denial of equal opportunity; and besides these common features of all class societies, it has its own special drawbacks—the glut, the slump, the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty. Socialists from Robert Owen onward have seen in the inability of capitalism to distribute its own products the essential vice which distinguishes it from other systems, and in planned production the only remedy for that inability. Without it "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" are for the mass of men but Dead Sea fruit, and the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" a dishonoured bill. Democracy, in the words of the Chartist orator Stephens, is "a knife and fork question, a bread and cheese question." To expect to solve political questions without solving social questions is to ask for Fascism.

In the nineteenth century the lead enjoyed by British industry created the illusion that the "bread and cheese question" could be solved within the framework of capitalism. Even after that lead had disappeared and foreign competition had begun to be felt, the opening up of Asia and Africa helped to perpetuate the illusion. The construction of railways, harbours and telegraphs and the sinking of mines in new countries led to temporary recovery and enabled capitalism to make concessions to organised labour which would otherwise have been impossible. This aspect of the case for Imperialism was put pithily and crudely by Joseph Chamberlain to his constituents in 1891.

"They had the gold, the silver and the diamonds; in Egypt they had the finest cotton-growing country in the world. They had the palm-oil, the india-rubber and the ivory. If only for the purpose of feeding our enormous population, such an expansion of the Empire would be not only justifiable, but almost a necessity of existence."

For the time being Imperialism, with its promise of sufficiency and security within the capitalist system, held the field. At the end of the century the standard of living of the majority of British citizens was higher than it ever had been.

Unfortunately everybody else was playing the same game. Everybody was out to develop his bit of Asia or Africa, and everybody was preparing to fight, if necessary, to get his bit or to defend it if he had got it. The game was not to end until it had bathed the world in blood and nearly laid civilisation in ruins. The opening up of Asia and Africa, the armaments race and the succession of crises from Algeciras to Serajevo were so many milestones to 1914. Liberalism was as implicated as Toryism in that march of protracted death; and organised labour, which had given hostages to Imperialism in the shape of those social reforms which Imperialism alone had made financially possible, followed its masters to mutual massacre.

In Russia alone, where the workers had got nothing from the old régime but starvation and bullets, did an organised working-class party oppose the war from the outset. Capitalism cracked at its weakest spot. Subsequent history has shown that the Russian Revolution was the most important result of the First World War. But only a genius could have foreseen in 1917 the achievements of the Soviet Union. Lenin perhaps dreamt of them. I certainly do not pretend to have done so.

One Liberal illusion remained to be shattered. The First World War had called into being a greater volume of popular feeling in favour of world peace than had ever existed before. Many hoped that some such body as the League of Nations might, without any revolutionary change in society, prove strong enough to establish an international order in which war would be, if not impossible, at least so unattractive as to be very unlikely. The League failed because there was no general consent among the powers to enforce the Covenant. Governments were trustees for national, not for supernational interests. The League of Nations could establish no international order, because the distribution of power, territory and wealth which it tried to conserve had itself no ultimate sanction but force. It was the product of the struggle of the industrial countries for colonies, protectorates and spheres of influence in which to sell their surplus products and invest their surplus capital. It was impossible to mobilise the conscience of the world in defence of a *status quo* so conditioned. Liberals and Socialists were justified in making the effort so long as there was any possibility of preventing or even postponing war. But it is not surprising that the effort failed.

It is impossible to envisage any future for the world which will be

tolerable to a civilised man in the absence of an international order capable of outlawing war. Such an order is not barred by the nature of things. Ordinary people do not want war. They are attached to their country, its customs, language and literature; they perhaps instinctively distrust foreigners as strange beings of unknown and incalculable habits. But unless they are first attacked, they do not want to fight, and even then they usually have to be conscribed. That capitalist civilisation should have found no means of employing its people peaceably without periodically hurling them into the furnace of war convicts it, more than any other fact, of moral bankruptcy by its own Liberal standards.

Believers in Providence are not generally noted for progressive politics. But to any who are, it must seem providential that just at the time when capitalism was displaying its final incapacity to organise either peace or plenty, a new Socialist world was called in to redress the balance of the old. Down to 1941 the Soviet Union was visible to the West only through a haze of caricature and misrepresentation. To-day it is admitted by all except envenomed reactionaries (mainly Roman Catholic) that the Soviet régime has brought hope, literacy and opportunity to previously depressed, illiterate and hopeless areas of the earth's surface; that after the First World War, when Western statesmen talked about disarmament, the Soviet Government alone took the matter seriously enough actually to propose that everyone should disarm; that when this failed, the Soviet Government alone took the League of Nations seriously enough actually to propose sanctions (with the necessary staff talks in advance) against any possible aggressor; and that when the Second World War had nearly destroyed Europe, the Red Army (to the confusion of the military experts who had predicted its collapse in three, six or eight weeks according to taste) turned the tide of German victory and saved civilisation.

If it be granted that the Soviet Union is a Socialist State, its successes should be credited to Socialism. Against this various alternative pleas may be urged. It may be said (as do the Trotskyists) that the Soviet Union is not a Socialist State. Or granting that it is, it may be said that its successes are in no way due to its Socialist basis. Or granting that they are partly so due, it may be said that they are not wholly so, and that the advantages due to Socialism have been too dearly purchased by the evils attending its establishment.

First, is the Soviet Union a Socialist State? Its rulers accept the Marxist analysis of capitalism and have carried out the programme sketched by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*:

“The proletariat will use its political power to wrest by degrees all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class, and to increase as rapidly as possible the total mass of productive forces.

"This, naturally, cannot be accomplished at first except by despotic inroads on the rights of property and on the bourgeois conditions of production."

In view of this fact I do not think that it can be denied that the Soviet Union is a Socialist State. To argue from the inequality of wages, or from the payment of interest on State loans, that the Soviet Union is capitalist is to show oneself hopelessly doctrinaire.

Secondly, are the successes of the Soviet Union in any way due to its Socialist basis? In reply to this question I am content to quote a non-Socialist witness, Sir Bernard Pares, who, in *Russia and the Peace*, refers to Stalin's work of industrialisation and collectivisation as having been "proved to have been indispensable" by the present war. This testimony is the more impressive because Sir Bernard Pares was once a bitter opponent of the Soviet Government. When we consider that between 1815 and 1917 every war waged by Russia against a first-class power ended in her defeat (by Britain and France in the Crimea, by Japan in Manchuria, and by Germany in the First World War), it is impossible not to attribute her victory in the present war partly at least to her change of régime.

Thirdly, have the successes of Socialism in the Soviet Union been purchased too dearly by the evils attending its establishment? It is difficult to hold any price too dear for the defeat of Hitlerism, yet, it may be asked, has not the course of the war proved that a capitalist power like Britain or the United States, given adequate preparation and competent leadership, is as capable of winning a first class war as the Soviet Union? This is a difficult question to answer. Whether the Western Allies could have won the war without Russia, and whether Russia could have won the war without the Western Allies, are speculations on which the wise will forbear to embark. But one thing can be said with confidence. When a capitalist country wages a successful war, it is no thanks to capitalism. The first thing which a capitalist country does when faced with a war emergency is to suspend that free exchange of goods and services which, we are told, is the mainspring of economic efficiency. The capitalist remains legal owner of his business and draws his profits; but his business is controlled and directed to the supreme end of winning the war. Even capitalist countries are forced to turn semi-Socialist for the purpose of self-defence.

But it will be urged that this is not the real question. Everyone admits that planned production is necessary in time of war, when effort has to be directed to one acknowledged end. The crucial question is whether it is justifiable in time of peace, when no one end of effort commands the same degree of assent. The Russian experiment has proved that it is possible; but are "despotic inroads on the rights of property," and on other rights which Liberals are accustomed to consider indispensable to the good life, justifiable in any circumstances other than an emergency threatening the existence of the community?

The answer to this question depends on our conception of a right. If we regard a right as a metaphysical attribute of personality, discoverable by pure reason and independent of time and space, we shall give one kind of answer; if we regard rights as subject to historical evolution we shall give another. Here I think it sufficient to say that in the ancient world the rights of property included the right to own slaves, and that if this right has in the course of historical development become a wrong, there is no ground for regarding any other right as metaphysically immutable. For the purposes of the present dispute, however, I am prepared to regard the ends proclaimed by Liberals when they challenged feudal society—liberty, equality, fraternity, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and so forth—as valid for our modern world. If the rights of property serve these ends, if they further the free development of all human beings to the utmost of their capacity for development, well and good. If they do not, if on the contrary they prevent the free development of a substantial majority of human beings, they must be subordinated to that development. The question is not metaphysical, but empirical. And empirically, the answer to the question whether the rights of property further or prevent the free development of the majority of human beings is written in the history of the last two hundred years—in the condition of the people after the industrial revolution, in the struggle for the Factory Acts and for the legalisation of trade unions, in the emergence of working class political parties, in the growing disbelief of the masses in the ability of capitalism to solve their problems, and in two world wars for the redivision of the globe. No rights are valid against the necessity of an integrated world.

Socialists, if they know their history, honour the past services of Liberalism in the struggle against feudal, clerical and royal privilege. The annals of that struggle are the Old Testament of the modern Bible of progress. But a New Testament is necessary to fulfil the promises of the Old. The slogans of Liberalism belong to a dead order of things in which it seemed possible for the average individual by his own enterprise to become master of his fate. The industrial revolution ended that. In the modern world, thanks to science and invention, the means of life (and unfortunately also of death) can be produced and transported to the ends of the earth on a scale never known before. But the average individual is now a cog in a vast machine. By himself he is powerless; only by union with his fellows can he be master. Indeed only by union with his fellows, internationally as well as nationally, can he escape the fate of being flung periodically into wars not of his seeking, and bring about an international order in which his children may live in peace. For this he needs organisation, education and an understanding of the world into which he is born. The Labour and Socialist movement is the people's own creation and is their best organiser and educator. But other movements can play their part. There seems to me no reason why those Liberals who are not wedded by their principles to the defence

of big business interests should not co-operate with Socialists in promoting what may be described as a Beveridge programme at home and in organising world peace abroad. The political need of the immediate future is unity on the Left. By helping it both Liberals and Socialists will be true to the best in their own past. By hindering it they will play into the hands of reaction and Fascism.

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON.

THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE

WHAT is the fundamental issue which is at stake in our age of revolutions and world wars? In particular, is any clear moral issue emerging before the consciences of modern men? Is there any great issue to-day in relation to which the ethical beliefs of men may play a decisive role and the ethical movement, in particular, may give a useful lead?

The Marxist cannot admit the existence of any such issue. Social changes, in his view, take place by a process of economic determinism, ethical values themselves being epiphenomena, or projections of the system of production relations in any community. Our crises are symptoms of a decaying capitalism. Capitalism is perishing by its own contradictions and, by the inescapable logic of history, is giving us, not without the accompaniment of stupendous catastrophes, a world society which is controlled by the workers. The issue at stake is not a moral issue, and the moral factors at work are of secondary importance; it is a question of human adaptation to changed conditions of production, and the ultimate solution is not in doubt.

The fallacy of the Marxist analysis has been expressed in numberless recent works. No more effective exposure has been written than in Leslie Paul's "The Annihilation of Man." I only wish to make one observation on this aspect of my problem. If the primary issue facing us were the supersession of capitalism, we should be well on our way to a better world. For if we are to judge the most important existing economies by where effective power resides, capitalism has already received decisive defeat. No one doubts that effective power in the totalitarian communities is in the hands of the political chiefs, but it is certain also that in Britain and America the economic problems of the post-war world, like the economic problems of the present war, will be insoluble unless the State takes effective action as a controlling and co-ordinating agent in the economic sphere. Burnham is right in his contention that post-war economies will be inevitably "managerial" and not "capitalist," in any sense in which that term has traditionally been understood.

But if the supersession of capitalism is inevitable, it is by no means inevitable that the new planned economies will be democratically controlled, or that the setting up of new privileged classes will be prevented,

or that the destruction of the power of the traditionally privileged will be achieved. This, however, is not a problem of capitalism; it is a problem which Soviet Russia herself has to face. Also the issue is essentially an ethical one; it depends on the strength of certain moral factors, which I will speak of more fully later, whether the effective working of democracy can be assured.

The Wellsian analysis of the world situation places the emphasis on the need to adjust political frontiers to economic realities. One world crisis will succeed another, on this view, until effective world controls in the economic and the educational spheres have been achieved. It seems probable indeed that unless a fair rationing of essential economic resources and opportunities can be ensured in the near future, through Dumbarton Oaks or some other machinery, our epoch of world wars will proceed before long to a third world war of which the conscious or unconscious purpose will be to achieve these ends by conquest. The moral issue is here clear, and there should be no doubt as to the policy of the ethical movement. The strength of the moral factors which will seek to influence the policies of the next few years we have no means of knowing, but it would be a cynical betrayal of humanity to deny that their influence is real or to assume their failure beforehand at such a time as the present.

A third view of the world situation has been brought to the fore by a number of important recent sociological works. The new analysis recognizes that capitalism, in any valid sense of the term, has reached its final stage, and that the Wellsian age of World Control must, in a relatively short time, be reached, either by agreement or conquest. Hayek, in imagining that we can put the clock back and return to economies controlled by the impersonal mechanism of the market, is living in a world of wish-fulfilment. Nevertheless, in arguing that planned economies are inconsistent with freedom, Hayek has gained a widespread response because of the widespread fear of the loss of freedom in the modern world. In the first two great experiments in social planning, those of Russia and Germany, the Party in control has assumed absolute sway over the bodies and souls of all citizens. Freedom of assembly, of publication, of cultural and political organizations, freedom from espionage and arbitrary arrest, have been abrogated; in fact, freedom, in the sense in which it has been understood in liberal communities, has been completely destroyed. Thinkers who believe that the essence of man's nature is his capacity for spiritual freedom see in the totalitarian régimes the annihilation of man. The new fear of the State power which has thus been created has caused a renascence of anarchism, as in the case of Herbert Read. Even so Marxist a thinker as Harold Laski has joined forces with Mannheim, Mumford, and a host of thinkers of less reputation in the stress he lays on de-centralization in planning. The problem of how to combine planning with freedom is the major problem of our age.

It is in relation to this problem that the ethical movement should exercise its greatest initiative. It must reject the anarchism of writers like Read, who fail to recognize that certain extensions of the State powers and functions in the modern world are as salutary as they are inevitable. The nation state is the only instrument by which the individual can be protected from economic exploitation and granted economic security; it is the only means of establishing that kind of planning and co-ordination, based on a system of priorities related to the satisfaction of needs, which co-operative production imperatively needs. A super-state is probably the only means by which nation states can be similarly protected from exploitation. The state may, similarly, be the only practicable instrument for certain measures of social conditioning which our present circumstances demand, and which need not be harmful if carried out against a background of essential freedoms.

But the ethical movement must equally disavow those who hold that the major problems of our society can be solved by political means, can be solved, for example, merely by the imposition of legislation by a victorious Left. The characteristic fallacy of the Left is to believe that freedom can be secured by authority. Freedom is only attainable where there are a sufficient number of persons in any community who both love and understand freedom, and are able by their zeal for it to leaven the whole community. The true spiritual ends of community living can only be attained by a religious transformation, by the dissemination within the community of the values on which a free society depends. The problem, then, of combining planning with freedom can only be solved by what Berdyaev and Maritain call personalism, by a faith in the true values of personality—spreading freely from persons, and spreading with sufficient vigour and conviction to permeate both human relationships and social institutions.

The primary task of the ethical movement, therefore, is to recognize the character of the religious transformation that is now needed and to play its part in its creation. It is only possible here to state a few of the essential conditions of the performance of this task

Firstly, it must be recognized that the two essential principles involved are the conceptions of freedom and of community, as they are defined in such a book as John Macmurray's "Freedom in the Modern World." What is of primary importance is the spread of a new view of personal relationships, based on the idea of communion at a deeper level than is commonly achieved. Most social relationships are either formal and conventional, or are the expression of social rivalry and self-assertiveness, or are marked by the voicing of second-hand or insincere opinions, or are the efforts of persons or groups to use others for their own purposes, or they are superficial and fail to touch the deeper levels of experience. Where true fellowship exists, the superficial mask which distorts human relationships is torn away, and it is possible to meet on a level of sincerity and reality, of mutual respect and tolerance.

Secondly, it is important to recognize that it is not sufficient merely to spread a knowledge of the true nature of fellowship and freedom. The new life of fellowship needed must be actually lived by groups and local communities and associations in their day to day relationships. This implies that the first step to take is the widespread formation of groups of persons who will not only teach what they believe but will express their beliefs in their concrete human and social relationships. The groups must exist for study and work as well as for personal communion.

Thirdly, it is essential that the spirit of fellowship of the groups should have its political expression. Personalists are not indifferent to political ends; far from it. But they approach political issues from the angle of the values of the person and through the agency of the regenerated person, and not primarily through plans for social legislation. The groups will indeed support the state in the exercise of those functions, including those means of coercion, which are legitimate and salutary, while resisting all illegitimate exercise of the state power and pressing for the greatest possible de-centralization, and autonomy for local groups and societies, both in the cultural and in the industrial sphere. But the end of social justice, which must be secured to some extent at the present time by political action, it will seek to build on a sounder basis, that of a true understanding of freedom and fellowship. True freedom is not freedom for the superficial, appetitive self; it means the release of those spontaneous, unconscious energies which express themselves through love and creativeness. Fellowship is not mere association; it is intercourse on a deeper level of sincerity and reality than is commonly achieved. While the group should have their political expression, their essential aim should be ethical and religious. Any compromise on this religious aim for the sake of supposed political gains must not be tolerated.

The problem of the character of freedom and fellowship may seem remote from the great political issues I began by discussing. But it is highly relevant. For, as I have already said, the fundamental issue of our time is not that of capitalism versus socialism, or nationalism versus internationalism, but whether the planning of our societies is going to destroy what is finest and noblest in the spirit of man, or, instead, to realise new potentialities. This problem cannot be solved by merely political means, as for example by such suggestions as Harold Laski put forward in his pamphlet "Will Planning Restrict Freedom?" The solution must be found through the growth of the true spirit of community, and this spirit can only grow and spread through the teaching and example of persons who both express it in practice and understand its deeper meaning sufficiently to know how to disseminate it. If this analysis is correct, the path ahead for the ethical movement seems sufficiently clear.

J. B. COATES.

A WORD TO THE BORED. Bored indifference to the current commonplaces which weary, and must govern, our social thinking is a most prevalent and devastating modern form of irresponsibility. Chief of these insufferable contemporaries is the blessed word "planning." Of course we are heartily sick of hearing about the subject, unless we happen to be apostles or jeremiahs of this particular idea. But patience with necessary ideas which are made undeniably boring by inevitable reiteration is an indispensable virtue of citizenship. Above all, just now, we must key up our interest in this idea of planning. We have not exhausted its meaning and its possibilities by getting bored with it. It means a new form of social discipline, which we must understand; and it stands for the distinguishing spiritual characteristic of the new age which is taking shape.

In primitive societies, social discipline is found in the bond of custom. In a feudal or caste order of society, the rights, privileges, and duties of everybody are prescribed by the defined status to which he is born. The eventual emancipation of the individual in a *laissez-faire* order of society leaves social discipline largely to natural appetites working in response to natural lures and natural constraints. It has now become quite plain that actual human needs and possible human achievements require a new form of social discipline; and that the formal character of this discipline is the social plan.

Although most social plans must nowadays in practice be sponsored by the State, social planning does not mean regimentation by a planning hierarchy, nor does it mean putting citizens into the arms of a universal wet-nurse. Our recognition of the necessity and the possibilities of social planning should be kept independent of our political theories. Social planning is a combination of the technique of large-scale industrial organization with the machinery of democratic political practice. It requires the collaboration of experts, and the definition and allocation of functions; but general discussion and decision remain with the public, and initiative and administration with local authorities and industrial bodies, the centre being responsible for research, the promulgation of enforceable standards and of broad directives, and the provision of necessary facilities and powers. The perfecting of this technique will elaborate a new tradition of economic and political life. The mastery of its incidental dangers and the realization of its possibilities should be our common preoccupation.

We cannot afford to be frightened by the enemies of this discipline nor bored by its friends. It is as important to us as democracy itself, and as exacting; indeed, it is inseparable from democracy: it is the next phase of democracy. But it is still an untried and unlearned technique. Success is endangered not merely by vested interests but also (and not less) by the habits of thought and articles of faith in which we have all been brought up; and by the awful nightmare of the totalitarian state. If we see our precious future hanging on our attempt to acquire together

this new discipline, we shall not be so lost in folly that we shall thicken the vast menace which enfolds that attempt by contributing the apathy of our inevitable boredom with a much-canvassed idea, perhaps even with a mere word. ODIOSUS.

BOOK REVIEWS

PRIMER OF THE COMING WORLD. By Leopold Schwarzschild. Hamish Hamilton. 10/6

Mr. Schwarzschild is one of the many thousands on whom the events of recent years have had a painful impact. As Director of "Das Tagebuch," and two other well-known weeklies, he fought, after the last war, against aggressive German nationalism. In 1933 he was chased from Germany by the Nazis, who confiscated his property and put a price on his head. He took refuge in Paris, where he carried on his old struggle in "Das Neue Tagebuch," which was widely read in London before the war. In 1940, when the Germans occupied France, they demanded his extradition, but by the aid of friends, he escaped to the United States, and now lives in New York.

His book, which was written in 1943, really consists of two separate pamphlets which have no very intimate connection with one another; one written by a tough realist who does not expect much from human nature, and the other by a harmless crank who believes in "*laissez faire*," capitalism and universal free trade, as preached in the England of about 1860. The simplicity of the crank is truly surprising. "When there is a shortage of one commodity in one country," he explains, "and its price rises, this commodity immediately flows in from another country, and the shortage and the rising price are stopped. Inversely, when a surplus with an attending drop in prices occurs anywhere, the cheaper goods are immediately bought up by traders from other countries, and the anomaly of the excess disappears. The same is true of people and of capital. International free exchange creates the currents which continually tend to level out shortages and over-production all over the world, to make supply meet demand, and demand meet supply, to transfer labour-power and capital from places where they lie fallow to places where they can be used." He thinks that after the present war there will be a good opportunity of introducing this arrangement throughout the world, excluding Russia. It would doubtless be vain to try to convince Mr. Schwarzschild that some rational objections are to be expected from most countries to placing the balance of their industries, their people and their capital, and many non-economic values, at the mercy of these unforeseeable world currents of supply and demand. It is unnecessary, in any case, as the matter has already been settled by history.

Mr. Schwarzschild preaches the same gospel for home economy, and expects that the triumphs of nineteenth century expansion can be repeated. "Let the millions of profit-seekers bring forth the results that they brought forth throughout generations. Let the servant state add

what could not be achieved by their methods." The role of the servant state is to keep the unemployed from starving during slumps which, Mr. Schwarzschild candidly admits, have to be accepted as inevitable consequences of free capitalism. As might be expected from his ideology, he regards the state as the natural enemy of liberty, socialism as tyranny, and the Soviet Government, in particular, as a dictatorship similar to that of Salazar or Hitler.

It is a pity that Mr. Schwarzschild has mixed all this and a lot about Marx and Lenin and the materialist interpretation of history with what he has to say about Germany. For on the latter subject, he knows very well what he is talking about. He pleads powerfully that the peace settlement shall, if possible, be such that it can endure even if the experiment of the world authority to keep the peace is not ultimately successful. This war, he declares, is a German war. If the world is to have peace, Germany must be completely disarmed and demilitarised for the remainder of this century. Italy will give little trouble, being unable, owing to her feeble war potential, to make any major war on her own account. Japan, confined to her home islands, is powerless without a navy and air force, and the elimination of these should not be difficult. Germany is the main problem. It goes without saying that the administration must be purged of Nazis, that war criminals must be punished, and that Germany must make a contribution in kind, to the limit of her resources, towards restoring what Hitler's armies have destroyed. She will also lose East Prussia, and possibly the Saar-Basin. Beyond this, there should be no deliberate harshness in the treatment of the people. They should not be given a grievance to nurse, and should be free to manage their own affairs as they wish. The re-education of youth is essential, but this cannot be done by the Allies, or any other foreigners. Germany must find her own way back to civilization. The chapters in which these proposals are discussed are impressive and valuable.

There is hardly a page in Mr. Schwarzschild's book which is not haunted by the fear that the new world authority will break down. His fear is not that the United States, under a new President, may relapse into inaction, or that Britain may, as before, be deflected by class interest from the task of preserving European peace, but, curiously enough, that Russia should disrupt the new order, and embark on a policy of aggression and expansion. Yet there is no Great Power that has more to gain by general peace than Russia, or for which expansion would be so meaningless. She has suffered ten times more in the war than Britain or America, and is visibly determined that her development shall not be at the mercy of another Hitler. She was the only Great Power in the League that consistently demanded sanctions against the Axis aggressors. She proposed in vain, half a dozen times during the years of appeasement, a common front of the democracies against Hitler. Even after Munich she was still ready, alone, to stand by Czechoslovakia against a German attack. It is possibly the palæo-capitalist dilettante

in Mr. Schwarzschild who harbours this invincible distrust of the socialist State. If so, he is not so harmless as we had imagined. Irrational phobias have done frightful mischief in Europe in our time. They will have to be somehow exorcised before the general mind is really at peace.

JOHN MURPHY.

THE NATURAL ORDER. Essays in The Return to Husbandry by Fourteen Writers. Edited by H. J. Massingham. Dent, 7/6.

Mr. Massingham is a tiresome fanatic (he will keep butting in with footnotes on his chosen contributors, so fearful he is of any deviation from the party line), and it is hard not to be sour with him. Indeed, his passion is a great disservice to the cause which claims him—in the main a good cause, and a very important one. Fortunately, some of those who share his general view are more capable than he of giving a persuasive and reasonable account of the faith that is in them. For, although concerned with the past, present, and future of agriculture in this country, these writers use the language of a faith and base themselves upon natural law and a natural order. There are others who share their passionate interest in the land as a way of life, and, having a strong bias in their direction, yet find no justification for sharing their conclusions. Let us admit the disintegrating and dehumanizing effects of industrial exploitation; let us assent to the propositions (borrowed from another book), (a) "The town and the countryside are economically, socially, and spiritually complementary," (b) "Maintenance of soil fertility at home is of greater importance than the importation of foreign foodstuffs," (c) "The home market is a paramount interest," (d) "There is no virtue in exporting to a greater value than needful importing": it does not follow that the landlords must be reinstated, mechanization of farms restricted, crafts revived, and "biological" methods of husbandry practised. These are indeed matters of faith. Mr. Massingham is the prophet. If his movement instead of writing essays in faith attempted to put down an agreed programme for the Return to Husbandry, that would be a radical test of their influence, and of their faith.

The truth is that the complexities, dangers, and possibilities of the modern situation impose a much wider context on the discussion of these real and pressing problems. To discuss agriculture as a sociological and cultural problem under the rubric of *The Natural Order* is not a good way of asking to be taken seriously. Individually, the writers (who are well-known authorities) have much to say that is stimulating and constructive, and the book makes a valuable contribution to the wider discussion which is necessary. It is not unusual in dealing with "a school of thought" to have to discount claims and pretensions before coming to more serious matter. The discounting destroys the school, but makes available the research which it has initiated or inspired. In this case, it might be reasonable to ignore the manifesto and review the miscellany; and that, for the most part, is what has been done by the press reviewers. However, there is good reason for taking Mr. Massingham's school seriously, for it does not represent the farmers (at least, it does not represent the most influential trends of agricultural thought); it represents the general public. It represents, for example, the outlook of the signatories of the majority report of the Scott Committee. It does not represent the outlook of Professor Dennison who submitted a dissentient view, which associates itself in the main with the views expressed by Viscount Astor and Mr. Seebohm Rowntree and by Sir Daniel Hall. This minority report has received far too little publicity and consideration in the country, yet it is an acute and authoritative criticism of the findings of the majority report; and its arguments should be faced and answered by those who are attracted by the Return to Husbandry. Sir Daniel Hall (a great countryman as well as a great authority) reached the conclusion that the future of farming lies in the industrial exploitation of the land, under the control of the State, for the raising of food and other raw materials required by the nation by the minimum employment of man-power, made effective by the application of science and machinery, thus liberating the greater proportion of the

labour hitherto so employed for other forms of production which will add to the real wealth of the community. This view is unspeakably shocking to Mr. Massingham. It is an impiety which would inevitably bring the most appalling calamities to scourge mankind. He and his collaborators say most of what can be said against this destruction of "a way of life," this insensitiveness to traditional and aesthetic values, this rape of nature and ignorance of biological verities. There may be something in what they say. It is most important that it should be said now and that it should be weighed. Food cannot simply be taken for granted. The general public is thoroughly confused and is not proof against any of the prevalent fallacies. Even the innocent looking propositions which we provisionally accepted at the beginning of this review, and which pass now for political commonplaces, are equivocal and dubious. The whole subject needs to be ventilated and fully discussed in all its bearings before our national policy is set. There is no better preliminary to such a discussion than the reading of this book in conjunction with the minority report of the Scott Committee.

The discussion once broached, the question of the productivity of agriculture and the maintenance of soil fertility should be distinguished from the question of the future of culture. The first is a question for science; the evidence may not yet provide a conclusive answer, but there is a great deal of important evidence and a judicious review of it now would be profitable and timely. The second question depends on the productivity of labour, and there is in prospect a richly endowed civic or community culture, of which Mr. Massingham appears to have hardly any conception. To reduce the productivity of labour, more than is shown to be necessary for the sake of maintaining the fertility of the soil, is to reduce the endowment, and may be to threaten the foundation, of this culture. And such a culture, founded on industry, is the only way of cultivating in the modern world the quality of work and the spiritual ends for which Mr. Massingham cares. By merging his answers to these questions in a new mysticism which finds a natural association with the present turn of public sentiment and some current economic catchwords, he arouses the justifiable resentment of others who also care for both agriculture and human culture. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped very much that the public will take the book as a manifesto, which it is, and not merely indulge in turning the pages of yet another country miscellany. It is a time for thought, and for decision.

H.J.B.

GERMANY, RUSSIA, AND THE FUTURE. By J. T. MacCurdy. C.U.P., 3/6.

A psychologist's views on the vast and vastly important topics compressed into the title of this book are worth considering. For the concepts of psychology are necessary to the interpretation of modern social phenomena. There was no other way of understanding Germany between the wars. Normal political and economic judgements were simply not adequate. Yet the psychologist's judgements on political matters when we do get them are usually irritating and seem to be superficial. Mr. MacCurdy's are not unusual in this respect. But it would be superficial to stop at the apparent superficiality of his psychological treatment. It is an honest and fresh approach, and the impression of superficiality is in some part the mere fact that it is not something we are very used to; it is not a political approach from the Right or the Left, and it is not an objective historical study. Neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, it provides something else which we need in our diet.

Mr. MacCurdy sets out to understand Russia, on the assumption that after the war nothing will be more necessary than mutual understanding between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. It will only be possible, he thinks, if both sides recognize the incompatibility of their social aims. "We should meet at the council table as those holding rival ideologies, but wishing to establish a *modus vivendi* and not as pretended friends." This will be a basis of successful compromise. The way to understand is "to judge every foreign action or utterance against the background of the traditions and trend of evolution in the government responsible for it. The word or deed that fits the ethos of the country is to be judged as genuine. The one that is incongruous with this setting is bluff and is insincere." We should

judge not by our own ways and standards, but by the principles of human nature as they are seen to work in the context of national history. The modern citizen of the U.S.S.R. is still a human being and a Russian. Mr. MacCurdy tries to show what this may mean in terms of present and future Russian policies. In brief, it means that "new presbyter is but old priest writ large." He speculates upon the chances of disintegration and the chances of expansion, and he justifies this psychological speculation by admitting that the conclusions are guesses, but claiming that the psychologist does at least attempt to found his guess upon the universal tendencies of men and nations modified by the particular tendencies and standards which prevail among the people he is studying. He does not stultify his judgements by projecting on others the motives and ways which he is familiar with in himself and his neighbours.

Mr. MacCurdy does not convince one that on this approach he has got under the skin of the Russians. But at least he does not presume to be a prophet; the future is plastic. The view of the psychologist is well summed up in his final paragraph. "Russia's fate is in Russian hands to an extent unprecedented in modern history; but in so far as we can affect her evolution it will certainly not be by treating her either as an angel or as a devil. We should rather look on her as human, perhaps all too human. Russians, like ourselves, have their virtues and their vices, but differ from us in what they consider to be morally admirable, indifferent or repugnant. Peaceful relations depend on tolerance, and tolerance must rest on knowledge of what is to be tolerated—on both sides." O.F.R.

RUSO-POLISH RELATIONS. An Historical Survey. Edited by S. Kononov. Cresset Press, 4/-.

This excellent survey brings together, in the compass of less than a hundred pages, materials for a personal judgement of the conflicting territorial claims which vex Russo-Polish relations. It would be hard to find authorities less biassed than the authors of this book. The late Sir John Maynard planned and began the work, and after his death Professor Kononov (an *émigré* Russian economist who in earlier days was a pioneer in the objective study of Soviet economic conditions) undertook to complete it. In plan, the work is a survey of the history of Russo-Polish relations, divided into sections with the documentary evidence given in a series of appendices related to the sections. There are six maps, three of them published here for the first time in this country. Quotations from standard histories on both sides and from official statements give an insight into the nature of the problem, with its main clue in the conflicting aims of Polish national policy; and the collation of material from so many diverse sources throws revealing side-lights on this continuing theme of European history. It is not merely the topic of the day. Britain has not been and cannot be a spectator of events in this theatre. British policy has been consistent and constructive, and it is important that it should be widely understood here once for all. This admirable little book gives sufficient for the purpose and asks very little time and trouble, and very little money.

O.F.R.

FULL SPEED AHEAD! Essays in Tory Reform by Viscount Hinchinbrooke, M.P. Simpkin Marshall, 5/-.

POLITICS MADE PLAIN. By T. L. Horabin, M.P. A Penguin Special. 9d.

THE BRITAIN I WANT. By Emanuel Shinwell, M.P. Macdonald and Co., 10/6.

These three books are uncompromising statements of political faith by strongly individual members of the three main parties. The most interesting and important question to which they may be expected to afford evidence for an answer is, what basis is there for genuine national collaboration in the post-war world? If these statements could be taken as representative, the answer might be encouraging. One can say that all three are scornfully hostile to the Tories, if one means by Tories the great financial and industrial interests in their political setting. The younger modern Tories of the Tory Reform Committee wish to be regarded not as Left Wing Conservatives but as Right Wing Progressives. Undoubtedly this helps. The

Tory Reform Committee does not, of course, by any means carry the party. But the old have a way of dying out, and the young are bred up in the new doctrines. And even in the immediate future, which matters most, the young Tories may perhaps be counted on to help to secure the definitive changes which are necessary in Britain not only for the sake of social justice, but also for her industrial place in the world and her standard of life.

The personal interest which attaches to these statements, although of secondary importance, is lively. Viscount Hinchingsbrooke, even with Burke and Milton streaming from his mouth, shows how naive and even crude the expensive aristocratic product of family, Eton, and Cambridge may be. In spite of the youth, idealism, and generous spirit of which the young Tories have their share, and in spite of their claim that the Tory party is the essential democratic national party, it is permissible to suggest that the young Tories show that their party is bankrupt. Mr. Horabin makes a sustained and violent attack upon the Tories, whom he accuses of maintaining by corrupt but skilful tactics a disastrous dictatorship. The record is indeed pretty bad, and not one which it would be easy to defend, or which many have the heart to defend. Mr. Shinwell is by far the most impressive of the three. His book is made of maturity, conviction, passion, and knowledge. It is, of course, undiluted vinegar, which is a particularly nasty drink. He achieves the very considerable triumph of making one feel after copious draughts that it is medicinal and necessary. It is a dose for all our countrymen. O.F.R.

THE VATICAN IN WAR AND PEACE. By Edith Moore. International Publishing Company, 3d.

This useful pamphlet traces the main outline of Vatican policy from the rise of Nazism through the period of the Spanish war and of appeasement, the moment of apparent Nazi triumph in Europe, the turning-point, and the final phase of fascist doom; and it projects the structural lines of Vatican policy in the post-war world which is now taking shape. It is an opportunist policy, to which the main clue is resistance to Russian influence, and opposition within each country to the socialist fulfilment of democracy. This is familiar enough, but the extent to which this policy suits the outlook which prevails in the United States is not so generally recognized and is well brought out in the pamphlet. In sum, "the Roman Catholic Church is staging a most powerful political come-back"; and the Vatican has the political skill and experience to exploit all the opportunities which the confusion of Europe will afford.

Is it necessarily a bad thing that the Church should be in a position to exert powerful influence to stabilize the European situation on a line of moderation? If one recalls the example of Austria before the war, it is hard to have any assurance that it is not. It must be agreed that the prospect of European stability is the hope of building up independent democratic peoples in Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugo-Slavia, peoples who will maintain in power governments which can collaborate closely one with another and work with the U.S.S.R. Is it to be expected that Roman Catholic influence will be exerted to aid the achievement of these conditions? Is it not likely that the Vatican will feel obliged to throw in its weight to disturb the centre of gravity on which these countries are likely to be able to settle down together? And if the Vatican can count on support for its policy from some of those most influential in the United Nations, what mischief and confusion may be worked in the name of order, unity, justice, and peace. Austria, once again, is a test case. The new Austria must be a new creation. The soil is being prepared, but what chance has the plant to grow if winds from all quarters sweep in with all their force; Soviet, pan-German, and Catholic? There is simply no chance for Europe if the foundations of genuine independence are not safeguarded. The Peace Conference must ensure the establishment of legitimate governments by genuine free elections and the ample provision of the economic means for such governments to make good. The disaffected elements will undoubtedly seek to strengthen themselves by support from outside, and the legitimate governments must be strong enough to deal with that. Nothing less than good faith

between the Great Powers will make that possible; and that is the reason why public opinion in this country should be alert and informed of what the dangers are. This pamphlet most usefully helps to serve this purpose. It is written from a socialist point of view and as a warning to socialists, but it is moderate in statement and will warn many others who have ears to hear.

H.J.B.

ÆSOP'S FABLES. Illustrated by Arnridd Johnston. Transatlantic Arts, 8/6.

It is a pleasure to have the opportunity of praising this excellent piece of work. Miss Johnston illustrates not *Æsop* but *La Fontaine*. For she exemplifies the same fusion of art, nature, and sophistication. The drawing is there (full of pictorial interest and rich satisfaction), and so also are the animals and the shrewd observation of men and manners; all intimately one; each sufficient in itself. This is a remarkable achievement, too much, if not too good, for the nursery; it must be carried further, indeed right into the adult world of *La Fontaine* in his original.

Le monde est vieux, dit-on; je le crois; cependant

Il le faut amuser encor comme un enfant.

Let some publisher of taste bring out a chosen handful of *La Fontaine* illustrated by Miss Johnston. Let the full-blooded illustrations have equal weight with the chosen texts; something different in kind from the ingenious and pleasing engravings or woodcuts with which such productions are usually embellished. It will be a book for collectors, of course; a race worthy of a fable to themselves. (The author of *Le Coq et la Perle* would have found for them in nature a kindlier analogue than did his contemporary *La Bruyère*, who likened them to noxious weeds.) It is among these children, less in number but greater in wealth, that our publisher will find his market. May he try.

H.J.B.

TAIL-PIECE

THREE TESTS OF COMPLETENESS. To be able to live or work with anybody, and get the best out of him; to be able to be an exile anywhere and live in the present; to be spiritually ready for old age, and to have a use for it.

INFINITE IN FACULTY. To live actively in the present caring for the past and for the future; to belong to one place and range in interest throughout the world: even these immense dimensions do not close in the mind. Yet a little active content, however tenuous, expands to fill the whole, and by daily increments becomes dense and luminous.

AN OPPORTUNITY LOST. What a pity that the centenary of the great Sydney Smith was not appropriately celebrated. It was an occasion for recognizing Wit as a subject of serious study and research, which it so evidently is, being in the field of psychology and also in that of semantics. The founding of, say, an Association for the Statistical Study of Entertaining Statement (A.S.S.E.S.) or of an Institute of Wit, with fellows and members, or, at the least, of a university chair, would have been a commemoration distinctively worthy of the genius of our time.

LA BÉATRICE. The Church of Rome is discovering an interest in Baudelaire. The power of the writer, the poet, is beyond question. But his human experience, and his handling of it? That is a razor-edge on which human judgements may walk out over the abyss of absurdity.

ALL MEN ARE LIARS. A real touch of conscience in the use of words, and how taciturn, how diffident we should all become! Irresponsibility so universal and so seldom challenged is hardly recognizable; it is not harmless, but perhaps it is necessary.

TRUE FICTION. The allegorical giants which stand in the path of modern progress are sombre realities but feeble fictions. The myths of modern science are fascinating fictions, for they look as like truth as any visible thing can. Indeed, fictions may be truer than truth; for great fiction is truer than history, and the great myths of science truer than text-books.

TO THE READER

This journal, which is published quarterly by The Ethical Union in a new format in place of "The Ethical Societies' Chronicle," will be expanded when paper is made available. Meanwhile, although short of space, we want our readers to have the opportunity of expressing their views and we invite correspondence.

Subscriptions for one year (2/4, post free) should be sent to The Ethical Union, 41/42, Chandos House, Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1.

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